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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to identify and document the most widely used strategies for the recruitment, retention, and placement of students in vocational education programs not traditional for their sex. Nearly 100 pieces of literature related to sex equity in vocational education found in the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) database were reviewed. The following were identified as the most widely used strategies for the recruitment of students for vocational education program areas not traditional for their sex: use of role models, parental involvement, prevocational classes and workshops, community involvement, active encouragement of prospective students, publicity/promotional activities, use of sex-fair media and informational materials and inservice training of teachers. The following activities were found to be useful for retaining students in vocational education program areas not traditional for their sex: supportive groups, moral support and explicit support of teachers and counselors, personnel training and awareness raising, unbiased language in the classroom, and placing nontraditional students in the same classes. Finally, the following activities were identified as being useful for the placement of nontraditional students in occupations related to their training: public relations, workshops for employers, student training, publicity, and promotional activities. The review concluded that sex equity actions should be expanded and be conducted continuously so that sex-fair attitudes and procedures will become standard. (KC)

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STRATEGIES FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AREAS NOT TRADITIONAL FOR THEIR SEX

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STRATEGIES FOR THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AREAS NOT TRADITIONAL FOR THEIR SEX*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1972, Title IX of the Education Amendments was passed to eliminate sex discrimination in education and to ensure equal opportunity for both sexes in educational programs. Teachers have been encouraged to treat men and women equally and expected to provide their students with a suitable learning environment in which learners can expand and develop according to their needs and abilities. Title II of the Education Amendments of 1976 directed vocational educators to eliminate sex bias and sex stereotyping from their programs.

There are certain barriers which need to be overcome in order to achieve sex equity in education. Eliason (1931) identified the likelihood of encountering sexual harassment by fellow students/workers as a major barrier to males or females entering nontraditional occupational training. Denbroeder and Thomas (1979) concluded that a woman's own perceptions and pressures from the family were the two prime factors deterring women from pursuing male dominated occupations. Their study also showed that women who had little or

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no thought of entering a nontraditional field were easily deterred by family or peer pressures. Odo and Nakahara (1981) listed traditional attitudes and behaviors that reinforce sex bias, sex stereotyping, and lack of affirmative career education as sex equity barriers. Northwest Attitudes, Inc. (1981) recognized sexist comments and/or jokes made by school personnel as the most often mentioned discouraging factor faced by nontraditional students.

Existence of these barriers could have several negative impacts. For example, Schenck (1977, p. 12) pointed out that lack of sex fairness could 1) limit the individual's career options; 2) limit vertical mobility (e.g., promotion may not be possible if it is to a position traditionally exclusive to one sex or the other); and 3) relegate many female vocational education graduates to the rank of the working poor because wages and salaries are differentially distributed among traditionally male and female occupations with the least money going to occupations filled by women.

According to Goggans and Laurence (1980), equality in vocational education can be accomplished if sex equity is viewed as 1) an integral part of the overall educational service provided; 2) a personal responsibility; 3) a supportive measure in expanding opportunities for students; and 4) an opportunity to respond to labor's needs and societal concerns.

As noted by Eliason (1981), sex equity activities should be comprised of the following: 1) a community-based advisory commitee; 2) a workable timetable for operation; 3) funding for a minimum of 12 months; 4) staff/consultants selection and training; 5) outreach recruitment; 6) selection of counseling models; 7) financial aid options for clients; 8) a public relations campaign; 9) ongoing evaluation effort; and 10) a research component.

Therefore, expansion and improvement of sex equity programs and activities are needed in order to overcome sex discrimination, sex bias, and sex stereotyping in vocational education. To do so, local as well as federal leadership is needed, collaborative and strategic resources should be provided for educational institutions to design and implement sex equity activities, and additional research needs to be conducted to identify and document strategies which will be of use for aiding in the resolution of problems.

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and document the most widely used strategies for the recruitment, retention, and placement of students in vocational education program areas not traditional for their sex.

METHODOLOGY

An extensive review of literature was performed. The ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Document Reproduction Service available at the Mechanized Information Center at The Ohio State University Libraries was utilized to identify and locate the literature related to sex equity in vocational education. Nearly 100 references were reviewed. The information and strategies which were related to the topic under study were deduced from the literature.

FINDINGS

Recruitment

According to Winstead et al., (1981), recruitment activities should provide students with the following information:

1. Current and future opportunities and earnings in the labor market.
2. Reasons to consider nontraditional opportunities.

3. Problems to consider in the pursuit of nontraditional opportunities.

4. Vocational preparation, needed and available, in nontraditional fields.

The following have been identified as the most widely used strategies for the recruitment of students for vocational education program areas not traditional for their sex.

1. Role Models: (Association of American Colleges, 1977; Beach, 1977; Bond, 1981; Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Macomb County Intermediate School District, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Shatz and others, 1981; Smith, 1977; Southern Illinois University, 1980; Winstead, 1981).

a. Successful nontraditional persons could be invited to talk with students about different aspects of their occupations such as training, challenges, and support systems that may exist.

b. Students in nontraditional programs could be invited to talk with students at middle schools about their vocational education program areas.

c. A resource file of people in the community who hold nontraditional jobs should be established by schools.

2. Parental Involvement: (Bromfield and Kilmurray, 1980; Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Ott and others, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Schwartz and Olson, 1980; Southern Illinois University, 1980; Veres and Carmichael, 1981; Veres and others, 1981).

As noted by Veres et al., (1981), parents are the most important source of influence in their children's decision making process, followed by same sex peers, opposite sex peers, and school personnel. Therefore, it is important to provide parents with information about nontraditional careers and classes. Family nights could be developed, during which, teachers, counselors, and role

models could talk about nontraditional programs and provide the audience with informational inputs about the programs.

3. Pre-Vocational Classes and Workshops: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Goggans, 1980; Macomb County Internediate School District, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Shatz and others, 1981; Shocklee, 1981; Winstead, 1981).

> An important element in the school curriculum is prevocational education which can serve to make students aware of options within the vocational program. An effort should be made to assure that students of both sexes get exposure to all programs, both traditional and nontraditional. While students are enrolled in prevocational education, their experiences can be enhanced by career information pertaining to the vocational education programs also offered by the school or area vocational center. Career exploration and orientation to vocational education should be heightened during this phase of students' experiences (Winstead, 1981, p. 1).

4. Community Involvement: (Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Shatz and others, 1981; Southern Illinois University, 1980).

a. Members of both sexes should be included in the school's different advisory committees.

b. A committee of persons in nontraditional roles could be organized to act as a support group and facilitators to encourage others to enter nontraditional programs.

c. Representatives of community organizations and civic groups could be invited to observe classrooms and laboratories with students of the sex not traditionally enrolled.

d. Women's organizations and other groups could be approached in order to plan community programs to promote nontraditional programs and develop an awareness of the effects of sex bias and sex stereotyping.

5. Active Encouragement of Prospective Students: (Good and DeVore, 1981; Macomb County Intermediate School District, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Shocklee, 1981; Southern Illinois University, 1980; Winstead, 1981).

a. Prospective students, especially those who have previously inquired about nontraditional programs, should be contacted.

b. Middle schools should be provided with presentations aimed at increasing the level of awareness of students about nontraditional roles.

c. Personal interviews should be arranged for prospective students. If it is not possible to have personal interviews, group counseling could be conducted. During the interview and counseling sessions, students should be provided with an introduction to nontraditional career fields, information in relation to economic benefits of nontraditional careers, and an assessment of personal interests.

6. Publicity/Promotional Activities: (Bond, 1981; Bromfield and Kilmurray, 1980; Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Macomb County Intermediate School District, 1980; Shocklee, 1981; Shatz and others, 1981; Smith, 1977; Southern Illinois University, 1980).

a. An organized program could be established to inform all pre-vocational students of the nature of all vocational programs. The advantages of each program for both sexes should be emphasized.

b. Middle high schools could be visited by vocational educators, recruitment staff, counselors, members of advisory councils, successful employed former students, and students in nontraditional programs.

c. Informational inputs could be sent to students, prior to their choice of the vocational education program, to assist them in making their future plans.

d. High school career days could serve as an excellent opportunity for nontraditional recruitment; all the material given out should be sex-fair.

7. Media, Informational Material: (Beach, 1977; Bond, 1981; Bromfield and Kilmurray, 1980; Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Macomb County Internediate School District, 1980; Shocklee, 1981; Shatz and others, 1981; Southern Illinois University, 1980; Smith, 1977; Weitz, 1977).

a. Bias-free brochures should be used to introduce, promote, and publicize vocational programs. Based upon the suggestions made by Weitz (1977), the following are being recommended:

- Outdated and sex stereotyped program brochures should be removed from all school offices.
- New brochures and booklets designed for recruitment or public relations should be reviewed before final publication for instances of bias and stereotyping.
- Brochures should include strong statement of schools' desire to have both traditional and nontraditional students in their programs. Pictures of both sexes involved in comparable activities should also be included.
- Special brochures focusing on opportunities for nontraditional students should be prepared for both general and special target populations.

b. Other Techniques:

- Bias-free slide-tape series
- Newsletter to community organizations and families
- Newspaper advertisements
- Radio and television spots (public servcie announcements)
- Bulletin boards (e.g., show students in nontraditional positions)

8. Personnel Training: (Beach, 1977; Goggans, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Macomb County Intermediate School District, 1980; Ott and others, 1980; Shatz and others, 1981; Smith, 1977).

a. Inservice programs should be provided for teachers and counselors in order to assist them in working with nontraditional students, both in recruitment activities and in the classroom.

b. The entire staff of each program area could be involved in developing a plan, monitoring its implementation, and evaluating the results.

c. Teachers could be provided with basic presentations in relation to the nature of sex bias in the society and in the particualr subject area.

Retention

People do things to reach a point and achieve their objectives. Those students of vocational education who are in nontraditional program areas should be encouraged and provided with incentives to believe that they have chosen a correct program for themselves and what they are doing is productive, meaningful, and useful in assisting them to reach their goals. They need to believe that they can make progress with respect to their goals and values. Otherwise, they will be frustrated and this frustration will have a negative impact on the quality of their life.

The following activities have been found to be useful in regard to the retention of students in vocational education program areas not traditional for their sex.

1. Support Groups: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Capriole and others, 1980; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Ott and others, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Veres and Carmichael, 1982; Winstead, 1981).

According to Riley (1980, p. 1), a support group "is a group in which

students, through the training and assistance of a facilitator, learn to function as counselors who support or advise one another within the group situation."

Capriole et al., (1980, p. 9) described the following as the major goal of support groups, "to assist student members defining, as clearly as possible, what they want to do with their lives professionally, what they believe is worth accomplishing in the world of work, and what they consider to be the essential emotional and career support services necessary in order for them to translate their goals into reality."

A support facilitator is needed in order to conduct the sessions. This person, according to Capriole et al., (1980, p. 9) "is an adult, preferably a guidance counselor (or any interested and qualified member of the teaching staff), who expresses the desire to undertake the work and who has some experience in functioning as a group leader."

2. Moral/Additional Support: (Beach, 1977; Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Good and DeVore, 1981; Sandler, 1982; Smith, 1977; Veres and others, 1982; Welter, 1981; Winstead, 1981).

a. The value of nontraditional students should be acknowledged by teachers.

b. Additional support for the nontraditional students could be provided during the first few weeks of the class. For example, tutoring for the non-traditional student who may be at a disadvantage stage because of a lack of preparation for the subject matter could be provided. But, this does not mean that nontraditional students should be treated differently from others; they should meet the same standards and criteria upon the completion of the program.

c. Counselors and/or teachers could contact nontraditional students (e.g., a letter can be sent to them) prior to the first day of classes and

praise them for their decisions, inform them about counseling services, and the like.

d. As pointed out by Winstead (1981, p. 2), "throughout the course of study, nontraditional students should be provided with information, materials, and resources pertinent to their programs. They should receive particular support for thier decisions to choose a nontraditional course. A library of films, filmstrips, periodicals, etc. is one method for educating students, as well as school personnel, about the advantages of providing equal opportunities to all students."

3. Personnel Training and Awareness Raising: (Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Ott and others, 1980; Sandler, 1982; Smith, 1977; Winstead, 1981).

a. School personnel should be encouraged to practice sex-fair behavior and attitudes.

b. Proper training for counselors, teachers, and other school personnel should be provided in order to assist them in dealing with their attitudes toward sex equity, working with nontraditional students, and handling the resultant problems.

c. School personnel could meet in small groups to discuss issues or share ideas in relation to the elimination of sexism in the school.

4. Unbiased Language in the Classroom: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Iowa State University, 1980; Ott and others, 1980; Weitz, 1977).

a. Any sex stereotyping in language, pictures, etc. used in the classroom should be eliminated.

b. While teaching, teachers should use terms which do not exhibit bias.

c. Telling stories or jokes which are sexist should be avoided.

5. Nontraditional Students in the Same Class: (Iowa State University, 1980; Mook and Legg, N.D.; Sandler, 1982).

Mook and Legg (n.d.) identified a buddy system or peer support as being very effective in relation to the retention of nontraditional students. According to them, a nontraditional student often experiences isolation and feelings of loneliness which may be compunded by harassment and teasing from peers. Therefore, attempts should be made to assign few nontraditional students together in the same class. This does not mean that the nontraditional students should be together all the time; both females and males should be placed in groups when dividing the class for group work.

Placement

Knight et al., (1982, p. 4) indicated that "successful recruitment of nontraditional students (a nontraditional student is one enrolled in a program in which 80 percent or more of the students are of the opposite sex) and consequent placement of them in occupations related to their training appear to be reasonable indicators of the efficacy of programs and activities aimed at contributing to the growth and prosperity of sex-fair vocational programs."

The following activites have been identified as being useful for the placement of nontraditional students of vocational education.

1. Public Relations: (Good and DeVore, 1981; Shocklee, 1981; Shuchat and others, 1981; Smith, 1977; Winstead, 1981).

> In the job placement process, the job placement coordinator must sometimes attempt to change employment attitudes and practices concerning potential nontraditional employees so that hiring restrictions can be modified. This can be accomplished through a variety of strategies, the most important of which is a relationship built upon good communication. Public relations efforts, therefore, are essential to establish a bridge between the education and employment sectors.
> A public relations program can include business and industry days, tours of businesses and industries, cooperative

> education programs, student resume booklets, and a placement services brochure. Each of these can play a unique role in the good will process, and in addition, the overall image of vocational education can be enhanced (Winstead, 1981, pp. 2-3).

Attempts should be made to identify employers who hire nontraditional students and like to work with them. The job placement coordinator could form an advisory committee of local employers in order to receive their assistance for job placement activities. Also, the job placement coordinator should be aware of the employers who have Government contracts because they must hire a percentage of nontraditional persons.

2. Workshops for Employers: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Good and DeVore, 1981; Iowa State University, 1980; Shuchat and others, 1981; Smith, 1977).

Couch (1981) concluded that employers who participated in her study perceived the employment experiences of men to be more valuable than the same experiences belonging to women and that they perceived women as more competent than men in the area of interpersonal skills. She also concluded that women with average qualifications may compete favorably with equally qualified men but women with superior qualifications may be overlooked.

Greenfeld (1979) conducted 34 structured interviews at a major Houston-based oil company and concluded that there had been efforts to bring women into higher levels of the organization. She reported that the respondents felt there were numerous similarities between the capabilities of men and women, but, differences were noted in the areas of opportunities for advancement, preference for the sex of the superior, salary expectations, favoritism toward advancement, and social lunching among others.

Therefore, workshops and other awareness raising activities should be provided for employers in order to persuade them that attitudes, knowledge,

and skills, not gender, should be considered in hiring people.

3. Student Training: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Cauley, 1981; Daugherty, 1979; Good and DeVore, 1981; Smith, 1977; Thomas and others, 1980; Winstead, 1981).

Thomas et al., (1980) concluded that a short-term educational program could have some impact in assisting women to enter nontraditional occupations by assisting them set their career goals and change stereotypical attitudes. Cauley (1981) provided the following suggestions for women who want to enter occupations not traditional for their sex:

- Become competent in your field of work
- Know your organization
- Work hard and be dependable
- Volunteer for assignments
- Keep up to date
- Join women's support groups
- Do whatever the job requires

The training activities for students could include the following:

a. Appraise students of resources available for individual assistance in job seeking such as the Job Placement Office and career counseling.

b. Provide students with information in regard to unions and the various procedures to apply for apprenticeships.

c. Encourage students to develop their own networks by contacting other men/women who work in the field.

d. Provide part-time job opportunities and encourage students to obtain work experience while enrolled in a vocational program.

e. Provide students with cooperative education.

> Cooperative education is a more structured approach to employee relations. Whether an on-the-job training or a work experience agreement, it is very effective. The cooperative program can show the employer that, as a worker, the nontraditional student has the same potential as the traditional employee. Student performance determines whether the cooperative job will become a full-time job, and whether other students will be

> offered a chance to co-op. Research shows that students on cooperative education assignments have greater prospects for jobs with those businesses for whom they have worked on a cooperative basis (Winstead, 1981, p. 3).

f. Prepare students for interviewing. Daugherty et al., (1979) directed the following recommendations to interviewees:

- Learn as much as possible about the company before the interview.
- Be promt.
- Be neat and clean.
- Dress appropriately. Do not overdress.
- Be honest and frank. If you do not know something, say so.
- Be conscious of posture. Do not sluch.
- Be pleasant and friendly. Avoid arguments.
- Be able to answer any questions regarding your application, including personal data, past employment, and training.
- Do not criticize other companies or past employers.
- Do not ramble, but also avoid one-word answers.
- Thank the employer for the interview.

Publicity/Promotional Activities: (Campbell and Chapman, 1982; Good and DeVore, 1981; Shocklee, 1981; Shuchat and others, 1981; Smith, 1977; Winstead, 1981).

a. Employers/personnel specialists could be invited to speak with students.

b. Printed materials such as employment manuals or handbooks pertaining to job training should be provided and made available to students.

c. An area, bulletin board, or display could be used to post current job openings, apprenticeships, and the like.

d. Student tours of business and industry could be provided.

> Tours of business and industry sites could be provided especially for nontraditional students. The selected industries should be willing to employ nontraditional workers. Conversations between nontraditional workers and visiting students would be very beneficial. It would also be valuable to

> introduce traditional workers to the non-traditional students. Interaction between those workers and the students may later contribute to a better work atmosphere if the students are employed there (Winstead, 1981, p. 3).

CONCLUSIONS

This review of the literature indicated that there have been activities, throughout the country, to overcome sex discrimination, sex bias, and sex stereotyping in vocational education. Most of the research in this field has been qualitative in nature; more quantitative research should be designed and conducted. Also, the focus of legilators and educators has been on the equity needs of women; more studies need to be conducted to study the similar needs of men. As indicated by Smith and Farris (1980), it is more difficult for males than females to unlearn stereotyped behaviors.

As noted by Landers et al., (1980), sex equity actions should be designed 1) to strike at the roots of discrimination; 2) to productively serve each and all of the target populations; and 3) to be continuous so that the eventual assimilation of sex affirmative and sex-fair activities will be standard operating procedures for the involved and concerned individuals and groups.

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